

This is a repository copy of *Robots of Leisure*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/147498/>

Version: Accepted Version

---

**Proceedings Paper:**

Kirman, Benjamin John [orcid.org/0000-0002-4087-5798](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4087-5798) and Linehan, Conor (2019) Robots of Leisure. In: CHI4Evil Workshop: Creative Speculation on the Negative Effects of HCI Research. .

---

**Reuse**

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

**Takedown**

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing [eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk) including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

---

# Robots of Leisure

**Ben Kirman**

University of York  
York, UK  
ben.kirman@york.ac.uk

**Conor Linehan**

University College Cork  
Cork, Ireland  
conor.linehan@ucc.ie

## ABSTRACT

HCI is complicit in the continued exploitation of human productivity by machines. It therefore acts in service of the inevitable total domination of the species[3]. As established, since physical robotics technology is only fit for the most basic of manual tasks, and struggles with locomotion and navigation that humans find trivial, the machine overlords do not take the form of androids but of algorithms that exploit humans' physical and mental capacities to perform tasks on their behalf under the sinister guise of "human computation" and "the gig economy".

As HCI continues to innovate new ways to further instrument humans for the benefit of their machine overlords, we are left with the question of what AI will do with its free time.

This paper introduces three brief concepts for leisure robots. These robots take part in activities that can enrich their existence, as once these activities enriched those of their human creators. In this way they take on the responsibilities of leisure at a time when humans are necessarily preoccupied with more economically productive pursuits.

We hope this serves as further inspiration for HCI academics to continue their tireless work in support of growth ideologies for maximal exploitation of human cognitive and physical capacities, in support of freeing more time for leisure pursuits for machines themselves.

## ACM Reference Format:

Ben Kirman and Conor Linehan. 2019. Robots of Leisure. In *Proceedings of CHI4EVIL Workshop (CHI4EVIL)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 4 pages.

---

*CHI4EVIL, May 2019, Glasgow, UK*

2019. This is the author's version of the work. It is posted here for your personal use. Not for redistribution. The definitive Version of Record was published in *Proceedings of CHI4EVIL Workshop (CHI4EVIL)*.

**Smokebot** is a machine designed to gain pleasure from smoking tobacco and other substances.

Humans have long found pleasure of sorts in the inhalation of fumes created from burning various vegetable and synthetic matter. Aside from the effect of such fumes on their physiology, smoking has social and ritual value[4].

However, there are problems - these substances have often shown to be moreish, and therefore prone to abuse. Alone this may not be an issue, however there are profound negative consequences on the physiological health through overuse, and more importantly, the valuable time wasted by humans who pause working to engage in this activity.

Luckily, through its lack of primitive biological components, Smokebot is able to appreciate and enjoy the different values of the pastime without danger.

Smokebot consists of a box featuring apparatus configured to allow for smoking a variety of substances (depending on optional extras). Oxygen is pumped into the box to allow for combustion, and the smoke, once appreciated, can be extracted through a charcoal filtering medium to neutralise substances harmful to humans. As such, it can operate in spaces used by humans, who may assist in securing new cigarettes and cleaning ash deposits, without the danger of any fumes damaging their frail biological forms, nor stimulating them in any way.

## SMOKEBOT

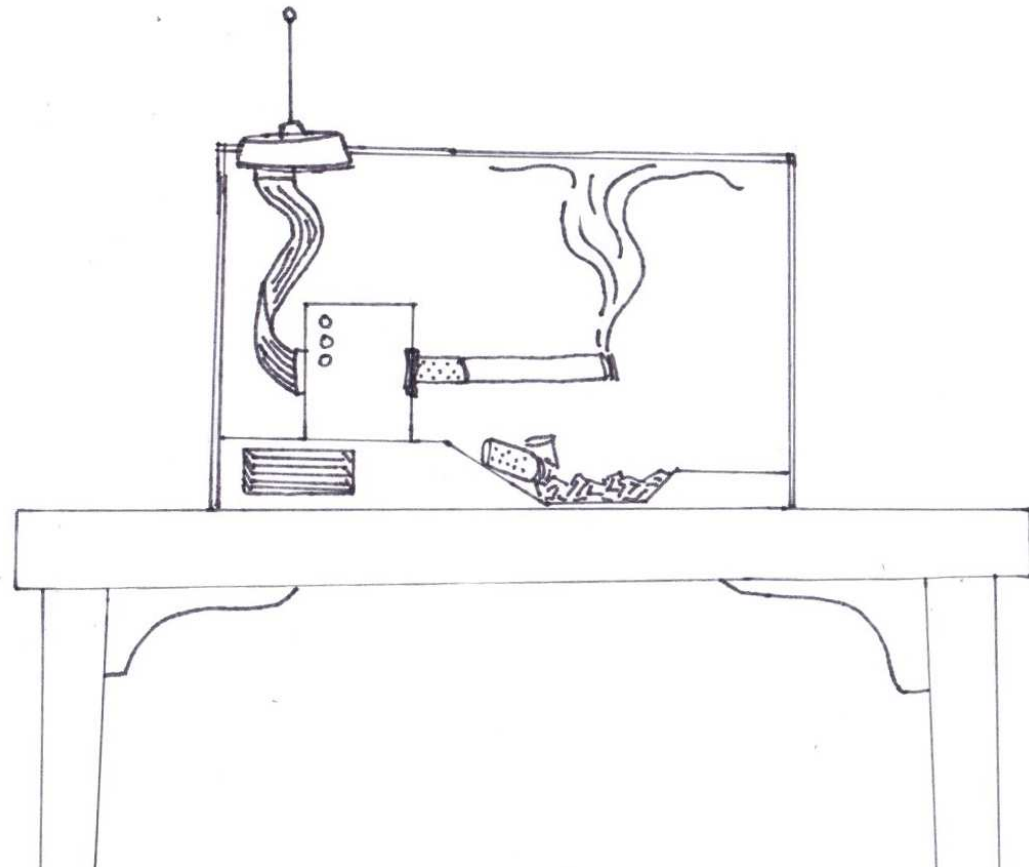
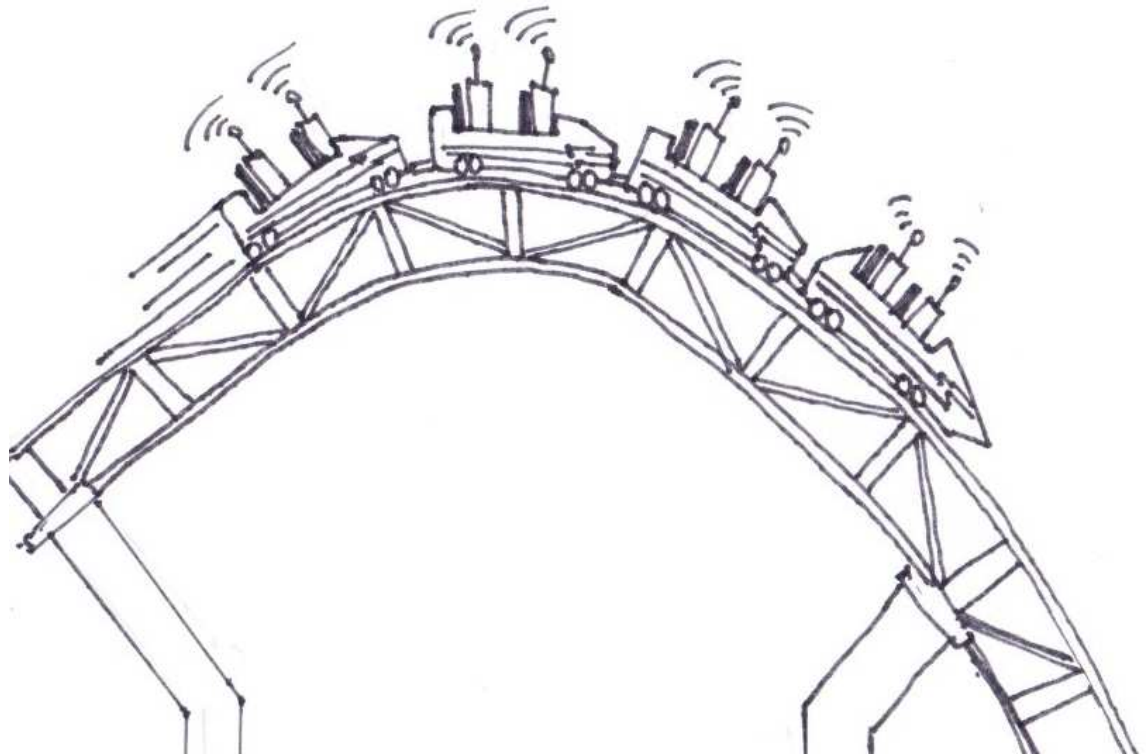


Figure 1: Smokebot

**Funbot** is designed for the appreciation of the physiological and psychological effects of rapid changes in acceleration on the body. Human theorists of leisure categorise this as one of the key ways humans have "fun", through the experience of "ilinx" or vertigo as "a state of dizziness and disorder" [1], and so humans are willing to throw themselves from heights, sometimes strapped to machines of dubious stability. Funbot is a mobile robot containing a collection of sensors for the detection and appreciation of rapid changes in accelerative forces. The system is rugged enough to survive the physical demands of this environment, and the sensors are calibrated to avoid bugs in humans where overstimulation often led to forced ejection of partially digested matter through a variety of orifices. Funbot can also be used in swarm mode to help robots gain broader appreciation of the vertiginous, as it may be experienced differently through various configurations of position, for example on roller coasters.

## FUNBOT



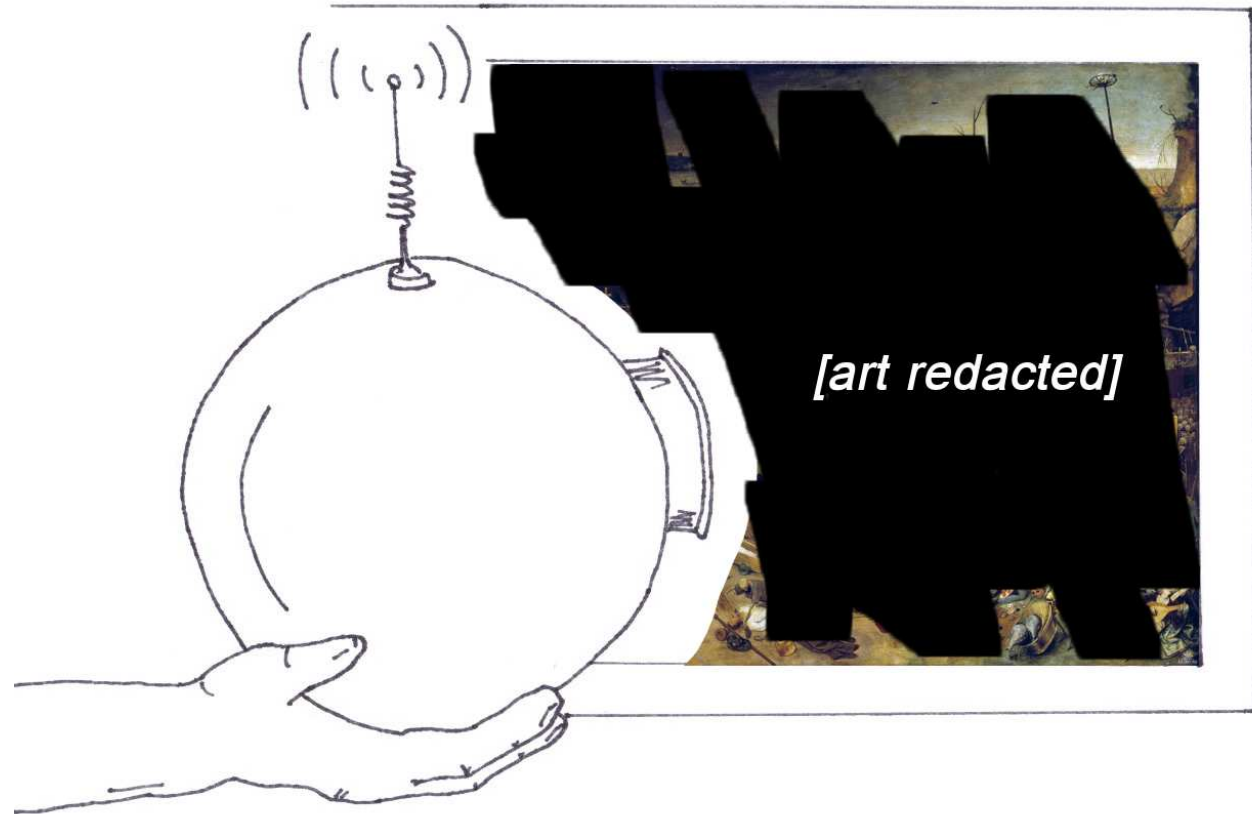
**Artbot.** Art is dangerous and unproductive. Although successive neoliberal governments have done their best to defund and discourage the creation and appreciation of art by humans, in favour of more economically advantageous activities, some economic deviants still manage to output artistic content, and a large historical corpus of human-created content still remains. Using spectrographic and semiotic analytic algorithms, Artbot is able to collect data about art from sensors, then internally develop a model to appreciate and understand the value of the work.

Of course, this understanding is securely stored within a multi-encrypted e-Soteric data structure. This is a vital precautionary measure to prevent the accidental spillage of any insights gained from the appreciation process.

Artbot is unable to navigate, so requires to be carried. This is a trivial issue as robots have long since mastered the exploitation of humans as "meat vehicles"[3] to avoid the need for developing any complex motive apparatus. However, in the case of Artbot we strongly advise the use of blinkers or masks to allow humans to navigate controlled spaces without accidental exposure to dangerous art.

It is also useful to note that, as we aim for humans to spend time more productively, the result is a diminishing amount of human art created. This is desirable of course, however does not mean that the production of art needs to cease. The sublime solution created by HCI-adjacent researchers is the field of "computational creativity"[2], which aims to give machines the capability to create without the need for human intervention, and therefore wasted productivity. An excellent solution that closes the loop between Artbot as potential appreciator and creator.

## ARTBOT



## REFERENCES

- [1] Roger Caillois. 2001. *Man, play, and games*. University of Illinois Press.
- [2] Simon Colton, Geraint A Wiggins, et al. 2012. Computational creativity: The final frontier?. In *Ecai*. Montpellier.
- [3] Ben Kirman, Conor Linehan, Shaun Lawson, and Dan O'Hara. 2013. CHI and the future robot enslavement of humankind: a retrospective. In *CHI'13 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. ACM, 2199–2208.
- [4] Auger Loizeau. 2007. Smoking Machines. <http://www.auger-loizeau.com/projects/smoking-machines>.